

Witnesses Unto Me

Acts 1:8

Introduction:

The author of the book of Acts is none other than the beloved physician, Dr. Luke. His writing style is that of a well-read and detail-oriented individual. The book of Acts begins with a brief greeting to its intended reader, Theophilus.

Acts opens with a reminder of the life of Christ from the ‘former treatise’, the gospel of Luke. It picks up with the events in the life of the disciples just after the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, and just before his glorious Ascension to heaven. It continues with the acts of the Apostles in the early first years of the church.

Power must accompany truth. God’s power must accompany God’s truth.

To make certain the apostles were not only motivated but also supernaturally empowered for their mission, Jesus commanded them to wait for what the Father had promised. That promise, made repeatedly during the Lord’s earthly ministry (cf. Luke 11:13; 24:49; John 7:39; 14:16, 26; 15:26; 16:7; 20:22), was that the Holy Spirit would be sent (cf. Acts 2:33). God’s pledge was to be fulfilled just ten days later on the Day of Pentecost.

But ye shall receive power...

Power translates dunamis, from which the English word “dynamite” derives. All believers have in them spiritual dynamite for use of gifts, service, fellowship, and witness. They need to experience the release of that power in their lives through not grieving the Spirit by sin (Eph. 4:30), and being continually filled and controlled by the Spirit (Eph. 5:18). The latter takes place as believers yield moment by moment control of their lives to Him, and is the same as yielding their minds to the Word (Col. 3:16).

After that the Holy Ghost is come upon you...

Spurgeon: The power of the Spirit is also, in part, moral power. He gives to men qualities that make them strong and influential over their fellow-men, he imparts dauntless courage, calm confidence, intense affection, burning zeal, deep patience, much-enduring perseverance.

...and ye shall be witnesses unto me...

Witness: Witnesses are those who see something and tell others about it. A witness for Jesus Christ is simply someone who tells the truth about Him. The

apostles, as Peter points out, “were eyewitnesses of His majesty” (2 Peter 1:16).

Spurgeon: the text says, “Ye shall be witnesses”; not “Ye shall act as witnesses” Every true Christian should, in his own proper person, be a witness for his Lord.

Acts 2:32 This Jesus hath God raised up, **whereof we all are witnesses.**

Acts 3:15 And killed the Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead; **whereof we are witnesses.**

Acts 4:33 And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all.

Acts 5:32 And we are his **witnesses of these things;** and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him.

Acts 10:39 And **we are witnesses of all things** which he did both in the land of the Jews, and in Jerusalem; whom they slew and hanged on a tree:

One thing we learn about Jesus Christ—He had compassion on the lost.

Mat 9:36 But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd.

Luke 19:41-42 And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it, 42 Saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes.

Psa 126:6 He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him.

Paul pictured himself as a debtor to the lost.

Rom 1:16-17 For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. 17 For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.

One preacher said, “Witness! To every available person, at every available time, at every available opportunity!”

...both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

This gives us the general outline of the Book of Acts. It shows us the spread of the Gospel from Jerusalem (Acts 1-7) to Judea and Samaria (8-9), and then to the Gentiles and the ends of the earth (10-28).

One preacher outlined this phrase, the geographical destinations, as target witnessing/soulwinning groups

1. The Difficult (at home)—Jerusalem
2. The Devout—Judea
3. The Despised—Samaria
4. The Distant—uttermost part of the earth

World evangelism could be summed up by these divisions or classes of people:

1. Jerusalem and Judea The JEWS, who adhered to the law of Moses, and the prophetic writings, worshipping the true God only, and keeping up the temple service, as prescribed in their law.

2. Samaria: The Samaritans were a mixed breed of people who worshipped the God of Israel in connection with other gods, 2 Kings 17:5, etc., and who had no kind of religious connection with the Jews.

3. Gentiles: The Gentiles were the heathen people (non Jews) who were spread all over the world. They worshipped and served no God. They were idolaters.

In Jerusalem—The capital of Israel. This is where the great work of the Holy Spirit occurred on the day of Pentecost. Most of the disciples remained in Jerusalem until the great persecution which arose in relation to the death of Stephen. (Acts 8:1-4). The apostles hung out in Jerusalem until James was put to death by Herod (Acts 8:1; 12:1-4). This was approximately 8 years.

In all Judea—Judea was in the southern part of Israel and had Jerusalem as its capital.

And in Samaria—This was the middle part of Palestine just north of Judea.

And unto the uttermost part of the earth—farthest, final (of place or time):—ends of, last, latter end, lowest, uttermost. In this context, Luke may be specifically speaking of Rome & Western Europe, which was considered the end of the known earth. About 1,400 miles from Jerusalem.

So, we see the strategy of missions in the book of Acts. Begin in Jerusalem...then to Judea...Samaria...and then to the major cities throughout the whole Roman Empire.

Conclusion: Proclaiming the gospel on such a broad scale was an incredible undertaking. Sufferings and hardships would accompany the apostles on the way. Help from God was vital. Thus Jesus addressed the very real need of the apostles when he reminded them of what the Father had promised for them. They would receive power in the form of the Holy Spirit. Only then

could they serve as witnesses.

"With this power—the very power which worked in the ministry of Christ on earth—the apostles would be propelled into the activity of witnessing [and world-wide missions.]"

So what? What about us? Where is our witness? What are we doing as a body to reach our Jerusalem...Judea...Samaria...Uttermost part of the earth?

Jerusalem: city and county

Judea—State

Samaria—nation

Uttermost part of the earth....out of the country

City and county:

Neighbors?

Those with whom you work?

Sports team?

Jerusalem—our community...neighborhoods...

Judea—state...

Samaria—USA

Uttermost...Earth. —world-wide missions

The power of the Holy Spirit in our lives causes us to have a burden for the lost...everywhere... at the same time. The same burden. The same desire ...

In our community---Gospel tracts...everywhere. Telling people everywhere...Being a record-bearer of the good news of the gospel everywhere.

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